

CLAIMS:

1. In a workflow system that a plurality of computers and a server connected to said computers are included and items are processed in said computers in accordance with a business process including one or more previously defined works, an item allocation method in said server comprising the steps of:

previously providing said server with an item extraction condition table including an item acquisition range condition and an item selection key;

receiving an item acquisition request from a computer included in said computers;

extracting items satisfying said item acquisition range condition, based on said received item acquisition request and said item acquisition range condition;

selecting one item from among said extracted items by using said item selection key; and

transmitting said selected item to said computer that transmitted said item acquisition request.

2. In a workflow system that a plurality of computers for processing items and a server that stores items to be processed by said computers are included and said items are processed in accordance with a business process including one or more previously defined works, an item allocation method whereby said server allocates items to said computers, said item

allocation method comprising the steps of:

extracting a plurality of items so as to at least allocate identical items to two or more computers included in said computers, based on item acquisition requests received from said plurality of computers;

extracting one item for each of said computers from among said extracted items by using an item selection key; and

transmitting said extracted item to each of said computers that requested item acquisition.

3. An item allocation method according to claim 2, wherein said item selection key is an identifier added to said item acquisition request, time when said request has been received, or an identifier depending upon a worker who has transmitted said item acquisition request.

4. An item allocation method according to claim 1, wherein said item selection key is a value depending upon a client program that operates in each of said computers.

5. An item allocation method according to claim 2, wherein said item selection key is a value depending upon a client program that operates in each of said computers.

6. An item allocation method according to claim 4, wherein said value depending upon a client program that operates in each of said computers is a thread ID of the client program, a process ID of the client

program, an object reference acquired from the client program, or an identifier of a connection formed from the client program to the server at time of said item request.

7. An item allocation method according to claim 5, wherein said value depending upon a client program that operates in each of said computers is a thread ID of the client program, a process ID of the client program, an object reference acquired from the client program, or an identifier of a connection formed from the client program to the server at time of said item request.

8. An item allocation method according to claim 1, wherein said item selection key is either an IP address or an MAC address of each of said computers.

9. An item allocation method according to claim 1, wherein said item selection key is either an IP address or an MAC address of each of said computers.

10. An item allocation method according to claim 1, wherein said item allocation method is applied to each of works of a business process stored in the server.

11. An item allocation method according to claim 2, wherein said item allocation method is applied to each of works of a business process stored in the server.

12. In a workflow system including a server computer and a plurality of client computers, an item

allocation method comprising the steps of:

connecting said server computer to said plurality of client computers and a database that stores items;

receiving, in said server computer, item acquisition conditions and item acquisition requests from said client computers;

extracting, in said server computer, items from among items stored in said database, based on said received item acquisition conditions;

transmitting said extracted items from said server computer to said client computers; and

selecting, in each of said client computers, items to be processed in the client computer, from among items received from said server computer by using an item selection key.